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Antisemitism in a Russian Spiritual Classic: *The Pilgrim's Tale*

DONALD GRAYSTON

In 1995, while preparing to teach a continuing education course on pilgrimage, I re-read the Russian spiritual classic, *The Way of a Pilgrim*. I had first read this book in the mid-sixties and remembered it as a work beautiful in its simplicity, even naïveté. The personal and open-hearted character of its narrator had been particularly moving to me. On this second reading, to my surprise, I noticed a number of passages and references of an antisemitic character. My first thought after noticing these elements was to ask myself why I had not noticed them on the first reading. Initially, my answer to this question had two components: first, that at the time of the first reading I had not yet experienced, as a Christian, the deep sense of grief at the persecution of Jews by Christians that came to me through later conversations with Jewish and Christian friends and colleagues, and through my study of the Holocaust; and second, that I had not at that earlier time arrived at the conviction arising from these encounters and studies that the spiritual wholeness of the Christian community was inseparable from its attitudes and actions towards the Jewish community.

I concluded, then, that at the time of my first reading of this work I must not have been sufficiently conscientized to the historical dimensions and implications of antisemitism, which had reached its dreadful climax in the Holocaust only a few years earlier.[1] Also, I had not yet thought deeply enough about the biblical and theological issues which continue to separate Jews and Christians. More recently, however, I have come to realize that there is a further, textual explanation. My first reading of the work was that of the R. M. French translation of 1930, which contains only the first part of the work, whereas my second reading was that of the longer edition of 1965. This longer edition includes the second part, which French called *The Pilgrim Continues His Way*, and this second section contains the antisemitic passages which so startled me. My recognition of the confusing textual character of the book in its different editions,[2] and the thought that, unrecognized, this confusion could contribute to a continuing acceptance of antisemitism by its Christian readers was thus the germ of this study.[3] I found myself wondering just how pervasive this pattern was in the literature of Christian spirituality, and in particular in

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the literature of Christian pilgrimage. If I were to continue reading and deriving benefit from this literature, if I were to help students think critically about the meaning of pilgrimage, both as an historical reality and as a possible practice for contemporary seekers, it seemed important to me to dig deeper into the literature of Christian pilgrimage and discover whether this pattern repeated itself there. I realized too that this issue raised important questions regarding the extent to which Christians have been and are now prepared to face up to the deep antisemitic impulses in their tradition. To reckon with this honestly, it seems to me, is crucial if we are to imagine and work toward a post-antisemitic future. I begin this essay, then, with an examination of the phenomenon of antisemitism as it manifests itself in this Russian spiritual classic, take a brief look at the presence of the same reality in some other classic works in the Christian literature of pilgrimage, and conclude with some reflections on ways forward into a post-discriminatory future.

STRUCTURE, PROVENANCE, PROBLEMATIC

The first part of the book records the testimony of an anonymous Russian pilgrim to his spiritual father, his *starets*, about how one day in church he was struck very strongly by a reading of the admonition of St. Paul to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). He searched for a way to do this, and found his answer in the *Philokalia*, an anthology of ascetical and mystical writings from the medieval tradition of Greek Orthodoxy.[4] From that book he learned about the Jesus Prayer[5] ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me"), began to practice it, found that it rooted itself in his heart and, in effect, prayed itself in him.[6] With the prayer thus praying itself in him, in time with his heartbeat, he wandered across Russia and Siberia[7] praying without ceasing, and depending on the kindness of strangers for his sustenance.[8] As a *strannik*, a wanderer, he would not in that period have been alone, and those whom he encountered would have understood without explanation what calling he had undertaken. As Andrew Louth comments, "'Wanderers' or pilgrims were a familiar feature in Christian Russia; one encounters them in the pages of the nineteenth-century Russian novelists."[9] One of the best-known examples of this is Tolstoy's deeply moving story of 1885 entitled "Two Old Men," the story of Efim and Elisha and their pilgrimage to Jerusalem.[10]

This first section of the work consists of four "meetings," or tales. It is rich in description and incident, and includes, in addition to a description of the prayer and its effects, many portrayals of what G. P. Fedotov calls "ideal types of the evangelical life, found in all strata of society—among the gentry, the army, the clergy, the simple peasantry," or what Alexander Golitzin calls a "rough crosscut of nineteenth-century Russian society."[11] The second section consists of three further such "meetings." The fifth meeting, which contains

most of the passages I shall examine, continues in the same narrative form, while the sixth and seventh meetings consist largely of discussion of spiritual matters among the pilgrim, a travelling companion, and three ecclesiastics. These last two meetings are chiefly concerned with technicalities of *ascesis*, and lack the narrative interest of the first five, although their general tone is consistent with the earlier part of the work.

The recent publication of the book in an excellent new edition, the work of Aleksei Pentkovsky, now affords us an opportunity to revisit this text, identify those passages in which antisemitism appears, and place these in context.[12] Pentkovsky's introduction presents the book, now called *The Pilgrim's Tale*, as a composite and many-leveled work, identifies the redactors for the first time, fixes the exact date of transcription of the four tales which comprise the first part of the work, and provides us with a partial history of the manuscript tradition. In the Russian edition of the work, which he published in Paris in 1992,[13] he was able to date the tales in part one as having been "told" on November 6, December 12, December 20 and December 23, 1859. This makes precise a dating which has always been possible in a general way from references to the Crimean War and to the continuing existence of serfdom, that is, a time between 1853 when the Crimean War began, and 1861, when Tsar Alexander II liberated the serfs.[14] Part two was told and transcribed about a year later: "A year had passed since my last rendezvous with the pilgrim."[15] This new edition also makes possible an identification of "the pilgrim" as "a real person, in fact two real people, who lived as wanderers in the middle years of the nineteenth century."[16] These were Mikhail Kozlov (1826–84) and Arsenii Troepol'skii (1804–70), both monks.[17] The process of redaction as described by Pentkovsky is very complex; however, if I am reading his analysis correctly, he assigns the work of Kozlov to part one only, and the work of Troepol'skii to both parts, meaning that Troepol'skii would have been the author of the first draft of the fifth tale, which I shall be for the most part considering.

What then at the time of the transcription of *The Pilgrim's Tale*, early in the reign of Alexander II, was the state of Jewish-Christian relations in Russia? Under Alexander I (1801–25), Russia, in the spirit of the Enlightenment, had extended many liberties to her new Jewish subjects who had come under Russian rule as a result of the partition of Poland. Nicholas I (1825–55), by contrast, was harsh and restrictive in his attitude towards Jews, and placed them under many legal and social liabilities. With Alexander II (1855–81) official attitudes towards Jews relaxed once more, but the harshness of the previous reign continued to color Jewish-Christian relations. Alexander II was assassinated in March 1881, and six weeks later a wave of terrible *pogroms* broke out, with violence directed chiefly at Jews, whose assimilation under

Alexander's policies was deemed threatening by Christian peasants who were (sometimes quietly, sometimes openly) supported by elements in the police forces, the military and the Orthodox hierarchy.[18] Discomfort and alienation, unaddressed and justified by centuries of theological supersessionism and cultural anti-Judaism, turned to massacre and *pogrom*. This continued throughout the time of Alexander III (1881–94), during whose time the later redactions of the book were undertaken.

The book's first notable antisemitic passage is found early in the narrative of the fifth meeting.[19] The pilgrim arrives at a town, seeks lodging, and is directed to an inn kept by a man named Evreinov ("son of a Jew," from the Russian *evrei*, "Hebrew"[20]). After supper, the discussion turns to the host's surname. Evreinov tells how his father, a Jew (no name is given) and "a bitter enemy of Christians," preparing as a young man to become a rabbi, devoted himself to the study of "Jewish gossip."[21] One day he walked through a Christian cemetery where he saw an exposed skull. He jeered at it, "spat on it, heaped abuse on it . . . trampled it under foot" . . . "picked it up and stuck it on a stake."[22] In a dream[23] the following night, the original owner of the skull appeared to him "and violently upbraided him. 'How dare you swear at the mortal remains of my bones! I am a Christian, but you are Christ's enemy!'"[24] This vision returned to him again and again, until, counselled by a friend, he decided to become a Christian, so desperate was he to be rid of these nocturnal accusations—at which point the accusing visions ceased. After his conversion, he "led a devout and comfortable life"[25] and before his death told the story to his son. The pilgrim responds to Evreinov's story with an exclamation of astonishment: "Who could have foreseen that the Jew's mischievous tricks[26] with a dead bone would bring him to true knowledge of Jesus Christ and guide him to a devout life?"[27]

The second such reference is a slighter one, but it leads into a related area, that of the discomfort felt by the pilgrim when not in his own Orthodox environment, a discomfort rendered understandable by a reception he receives on one occasion from a *raskolnik*, an Old Believer.[28] In the fourth tale, he had mentioned a time when, travelling through Kazan province, he spent the night in a Tatar (i.e., Muslim) settlement. He had resigned himself to having to spend the night in this (to him) uncongenial location when he saw a coach driven by a Russian coachman in front of a hut: "Filled with joy I took it into my head to ask for lodgings for the night there, thinking that at least I would spend the night among Christians."[29] As it turned out, he spent the night in the company of the Russian aristocrat whose coach it was. Then in the fifth tale, he says something similar: "I traveled for about two hundred kilometers, though not without annoyance, for the road passed through pubs[30] and Jewish villages and I seldom came across a Christian dwelling."[31]

Later, however, he notices a Russian Christian inn, which he enters. The innkeeper immediately asks him what his religion is. Upon being told that the pilgrim is an Orthodox Christian, he responds aggressively: "'What orthodoxy you have!' he said with a grin, 'for you, orthodoxy is only in your speech, but in your deeds you are a Muslim infidel!'"[32] Both pilgrim and innkeeper are Christians, but the innkeeper, an Old Ritualist, chooses to express his contempt for the Orthodox by using "Muslim" as a term of scorn to describe the deeds of someone of whom in fact he has no knowledge. Another term referring to Muslims, "Saracen," is used later to describe the most unlikely person from whom one might expect to receive a "useful word."[33] In such references we encounter the negative use of alterity, of otherness, which for some people is the prime identifying characteristic of their religious life. No less important in our own time than awareness of antisemitism is a recognition of the equal unacceptability of scorn for Islam which these comments convey.

Returning to the passages I have noted, what patterns emerge? Terms such as "gossip" or "chit-chat" serve to trivialize Jewish objections to Christian teaching. That they come from a Christian whose father was originally a Jew is sad evidence that one form of negative alterity has simply been exchanged for another. The story of the abuse of the skull, combining insult to Christians with a paranormal consequence, is not far removed from Chaucer's tale of the schoolboy who sings *O Alma Redemptoris* with his throat cut.[34] There is also dehumanization in the lack of a name for Evreinov's father, in the ambiguity (chosen? imposed?) around the process by which Evreinov received his surname, and in the depriving of Evreinov's father of his paternal dignity by the pilgrim when he speaks of "the Jew's" rather than "your father's" experience.[35] Again the deceptively simple reference to pubs in the same sentence in which the pilgrim speaks of "not without annoyance . . . [passing through] Jewish villages"[36] masks a canard against Jews regularly used in Russia to justify assaults, theft, even massacre.

But this is not the whole story. In the same inn where the Old Ritualist innkeeper had insulted him, the pilgrim meets a monk of Athos—a Greek, however, not a Russian. One day as the pilgrim and the Athonite were discussing the Jesus Prayer, they were visited by another pilgrim. He grieved and railed against the Jews, through whose settlements he was traveling, complaining bitterly about the unfriendliness and deceit he had endured at their hands:

> He was so bitter against them that he cursed them and even considered them unworthy to live on earth because of their obstinacy and unbelief. Finally he said that he had an invincible aversion toward them.

To this, however, the Greek monk makes patient and eirenic reply.[37]

> "You are wrong, my friend, so to rail against the Jews and curse them," he said. "They too are God's creatures, just as we are. You should pity[38] them and pray for them, not curse them. Believe me, your loathing of them comes from your not being confirmed in the love of God and because you do not have interior peace."

He then quotes from Mark the Monk[39]:

> The soul that is interiorly united with God is by reason of its surpassing joy like a mild and simple-hearted child and no longer condemns anyone, be they a pagan Greek, a Jew or a sinner. It looks on everyone without distinction with a pure eye and rejoices equally over the whole world, and wishes that everyone, be they Greeks or Jews or pagans, [might] praise the Lord.[40]

This second pilgrim, however, in passing through Jewish settlements has experienced, he says, not simply inner annoyance, but outward "unfriendliness and deceit." In a chilling outburst proleptic of the Holocaust, he declares Jews "unworthy to live on earth."[41] The Greek monk's response to this outburst, however, is a gentle and disarming one; and from our pilgrim's inclusion of it in his narrative we may take it that he agreed with the monk. The text, though, gives no indication whether or not the second pilgrim was open to the substance of the monk's admonition.

Also on the positive side of the ledger is the pilgrim's own response to the innkeeper's diatribe:

> . . . I realized that this old man was a deep-rooted Old Ritualist, but since he spoke plausibly I could not argue with him or convert him. I just thought to myself that it was impossible to bring the Old Ritualists back to the true church until church services are put right among us and until the clergy in particular set an example in this regard. The Old Ritualist knows nothing of the inner life, and relies on externals, whereas we neglect them.[42]

This is a self-aware and self-critical response, and probably represents the position of Mikhail Kozlov, one of the chief authors of part one of the *Tale*. Kozlov was born into a family of Old Ritualists, but converted to Orthodoxy in 1846, at the age of twenty. In one of his books, he describes how the practice of the Jesus Prayer was instrumental in his conversion, after which his principal work was missionary activity among his former co-religionists.[43] The pilgrim's comment, I therefore conjecture, comes out of the experience of someone who has been intentionally engaged in contact with the Old Ritualists, and here shares his missionary conclusions. Its tone is very much akin to the Greek monk's calm response to the second pilgrim's angry outburst against the Jews.

Again in relation to redaction, I note the work of another editor, Bishop Feofan (or Theophan) the Recluse (1815–94), a noted mystical figure of his

time, who resigned his episcopal responsibilities, according to Orthodox tradition, for the life of a hermit. In the 1883 edition he "corrected" the first edition of 1881, omitting several passages and adding others, but he did not excise or amend the antisemitic passages.[44] French does not refer to them in any of his editions, nor W. H. Frere in his introduction to the 1930 translation by French, nor Anthony Bloom in his introduction to French's reprint of 1972, nor Helen Bacovcin in her edition, nor Pentkovsky in his introduction, nor Jaroslav Pelikan in his preface to the Pentkovsky edition, nor Gillet, Fedotov or Bouyer in their discussions of the work, nor Golitzin, Sonderer or Louth in their reviews.[45] I have surveyed the various editions of the work in this way simply to record the fact that no previous editor or reviewer to date has identified its antisemitic elements as a matter for concern; and if it is true, as Golitzin says, that the book is offering "a conscious theology of spiritual practice . . . both deliberate and sophisticated,"[46] and that it has "a single, primary message that it seeks to pound home on virtually every page,"[47] then the difficulty is compounded if we do not distinguish the antisemitic elements from the perduring elements of this "primary message."

The sole exception among the commentators in this regard is Kallistos Ware, who in his foreword to Gillet's book offers a balancing comment in his description of Gillet's work on Jewish-Christian relations in the early 1940s at the Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham. In his book *Communion in the Messiah*, cited by Ware, Gillet asserts that beyond the compassion that Christians might have for Jews simply as human beings, they are spiritually required by their faith to recognize Jews as brothers and sisters, and that for Christians to help Jews, something highly germane at the time, "means to help the whole of Israel[48] to fulfil the mysterious destiny to which it is called, and which is inseparable from the destiny of the Christian Church itself."[49] This statement is spiritually much akin to a comment of Thomas Merton in a letter of 15 February 1962 to Zalman Schacter-Shalomi:

> . . . the Jews have been the great eschatological sign of the twentieth century. . . . The Suffering Servant is One: Christ, Israel. There is one wedding and one wedding feast, not two or five or six. . . .There is one mystery, and the mystery of Israel and of the Church is ultimately to be revealed as One.[50]

Both comments strike an eschatological note that I shall revisit again in this essay's conclusion. Suffice it for the moment to say that however this oneness or unity of Israel and the Church be defined, eschatologically or otherwise, it will not be as an absorptive or assimilative unity in which the smaller community is taken into unequal partnership with the larger.[51]

CHAUCER, COMENIUS, BUNYAN

It would be one thing if this pattern of antisemitism were an isolated phenomenon, but it is not; it shows up in a range of other Christian works on pilgrimage. Thus we move now to brief acknowledgements of three other classic works of the genre: Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Comenius's *The Labyrinth of the World*, and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.[52] Chaucer's "Prioress's Tale" we have already mentioned; it tells the story of a schoolboy devoted to the Virgin Mary: "[A] litel clergeon, seven yeer of age,"[53] whose throat is cut by Jews. This, however, does not prevent him from singing, *post mortem*, a Marian anthem, the sound of which brings those searching for him to his body. They remove the seed which the Virgin has placed on his tongue and which has made possible the miracle; and so the child "dies" a second time and is buried. The Prioress who tells the tale is devout, elegant and refined; but these qualities, as F. N. Robinson comments, are "unhappily not incompatible with a bigoted hatred for the 'cursed Jewes.'"[54] She is able to dwell, with apparent equanimity, on the gruesome details of the child's murder and the Jews' punishment in an expression of late fourteenth-century sensibility very unlikely to commend itself to the contemporary reader, Christian or not.

Comenius's *Labyrinth,* first published in Czech in 1623, tells the story of the journey of a pilgrim through a seventeenth-century Europe imaged as a marketplace. It anticipates aspects of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, in support of which statement I need cite only the names of the first two figures encountered by the pilgrim, Ubiquitous and Delusion.[55] It is a story of pilgrim as outsider, as voluntary exile, as caustic satirist, as seeker of a home both physical and spiritual. The antisemitism of this work is neither primarily related to encounters with actual Jews, as with *The Pilgrim's Tale* (although there was a substantial Jewish community in Prague at the time),[56] nor is it an example of antisemitism without Jews, as in Chaucer. Rather, it is a picaresque work (akin in this regard to Voltaire's *Candide,* in its own way a kind of pilgrimage narrative), with its antisemitism presented through the encounters of a naïve pilgrim protagonist with representations, many of them Jewish, of the monstrous and the hypocritical; theologically, it is founded on an unchallenged understanding of God's covenant with Israel as simply no longer in effect.

Bunyan's attitude to the Jewish reality is much like that of Comenius, an implicit antisemitism, rather than an explicit or polemic assault. The first part of *Pilgrim's Progress* was published in 1678, the second part in 1684, a time when Jews had begun to return openly to England, though not in great numbers. Bunyan opens his book much as Comenius does, by introducing us to his pilgrim. This man, Christian by name, was

> clothed with rags, . . . [had] a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back. I looked, . . . and as he read, he wept and trembled: and not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry; saying, "What shall I do?"[57]

The story is then told of his journey from the City of Destruction, where he was born, to the Celestial City, which with his friend Hopeful he finally enters in triumph. There he is, ironically, welcomed by Moses (together with David, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Enoch and Elijah), all long-established in the Celestial City. The theological justification for this is of course that Moses and the others were among the saints of the older dispensation saved by Christ in the harrowing of hell, which he undertook between the crucifixion and the resurrection.[58] Unable himself to offer salvation, Moses is saved by the retroactive grace of Christ; but it is clear from the book as a whole that this grace does not apply to Jews who have died since the harrowing of hell.

Chaucer's antisemitism conveys direct, even murderous hostility towards Jews even in their absence. From Comenius we learn that Jews are disgusting, obsessed with the grotesqueries of the Talmud, understandably therefore disliked and justifiably to be despised. From Bunyan we learn that Gospel has superseded Law, which is now of no use to anyone seeking salvation. In all of them, together with *The Pilgrim's Tale*, we encounter a literary tradition around pilgrimage which, like the faith it portrays, has been in many different ways and to different degrees marred by the ugliness of antisemitism.

THE WAYS AHEAD

I venture now to sketch three ways ahead from the recognition of anti-Semitism in *The Pilgrim's Tale*—ways pedagogical, in my university teaching; theological, particularly in relation to modernity and to the eschaton; and spiritual, in relation to pilgrimage and spiritual formation.

The process of re-reading these texts has had a profound impact on my teaching, especially my teaching on pilgrimage. Following my own re-reading of these classic texts, I began to envisage the possibility of teaching a course on pilgrimage in which they, along with others, would be required reading. In such a course, I decided, I would bring forward the antisemitic strain in these works, not as the dominant element, but as an element of critical importance—pernicious in its very successful integration over time into the Christian tradition, dangerously beneath notice because from inside the tradition and unreflected upon it does not seem to take up very much religious "space." Much like the apparent readings of the translators and editors (and myself) of *The Pilgrim's Tale*, so were my first readings of Chaucer and Bunyan: I simply read past the trivializations or denigrations of Jews and their tradition with no particular awareness, accustomed as I was to the antisemitism that had been

domesticated into my own tradition. Reading Comenius for the first time for purposes of this study, however, I was alert in advance to the possibility of antisemitic perspectives and images. I had developed for myself a hermeneutics of suspicion, and it is movement of a similar kind that I crave for any student of these works.

Because I am teaching at a Canadian university, I decided to begin the course with Lac Ste-Anne, in Alberta, for more than a century the focus of Roman Catholic pilgrimage, and for centuries, perhaps millennia before that, a place sacred to the First Nations of the Prairies. Subsequent classes focused on Jerusalem, Rome, Iona, Santiago, Canterbury, Bunyan and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Thomas Merton's multifaith pilgrimage—he uses the word himself—to Asia in 1968,[59] the labyrinth as a form of chiefly urban pilgrimage, and then two instances of what I call *anti-pilgrimage*—Auschwitz and Hiroshima. For purposes of the course, I defined pilgrimage as a journey to a sacred place in the expectation of transformation, and anti-pilgrimage as a journey to a place of horror, yet also in the expectation of transformation. The inclusion of the journey to Auschwitz (which I myself undertook in July 2001) permitted me to place the apparently minor antisemitic elements in the classics of Christian pilgrimage which I have examined here into a larger and more demanding framework, that of the Holocaust. I found the teaching of this course deeply satisfying (and at the same time troubling), and was glad that the classes included both Jewish and Christian students, as well as agnostic and atheist students, most of these latter critical of if not hostile to the Christian tradition. Given the make-up of the class, I saw that there was first of all the work of repentance within the Christian community to be undertaken, and the work of *tikkun*, the repair of relations with the Jewish community. But there was also an interpretive work to be done with students belonging to neither community, who had come by other routes to an understanding of the unacceptable nature of antisemitism, and who were ready to criticize "Christianity" for many reasons, one of these being its historic antisemitism. Another result of this course has been the formation of a pilgrimage studies working group, made up of members of the Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality who have a special interest in pilgrimage,[60] and here I express the hope that some of our future work will address the issues with which this essay is concerned.

The theological issues arising from such a re-reading of these spiritual classics are of course immense and complex. I begin with the shift in my own theological thinking between the two readings of the Russian classic. Between the sixties and the nineties, I moved from the supersessionist view to a one-covenant view. In other words, I moved from the view that the "old" covenant of God with "old" Israel has been superseded by the "new" covenant with the "new" Israel through Jesus understood as Messiah, to the view that those

outside the original covenant, i.e., the Gentiles, have through the life and work of Jesus been grafted onto the tree of Israel, the wild olive onto the cultivated.[61] I acknowledge that this view is not accepted by mainstream Jews, nor by all mainstream Christians, although it is accepted by an increasing number of such Christians. For these Christians, "conversion" of Jews to Christianity is not necessary, inasmuch as Jews already live their lives in the context of a covenant that has never been abrogated or superseded. Coming to this conclusion was momentous for me, and I am still reflecting on its implications.

In the second place, I would note that all of these works on pilgrimage come out of a pre-modern sensibility. In this respect there is very little difference between the spiritual world of Chaucer's Prioress and that of the anonymous *strannik* of *The Pilgrim's Tale*. Long before that *Tale* was written, of course, the historical process we call modernity had begun to run its course in and beyond western Europe, a modernity which Zygmunt Bauman, for one, regards as the single most decisive factor in the coming to be of the Holocaust.[62] Now at this beginning of the 21st century, we can acknowledge that modernity has come to an end in a definable way if not in terms of continuing influence. Postmodernity has also, for some of us at least, come and gone in a similar sense, although of course its cultural influence continues to be strong. In such a time, in this very young and nameless epoch after the end of modernity and, if this be granted, of postmodernity, we have the opportunity to look back afresh to pre-modern times. Having laid aside the hegemonic lenses through which we looked at each other during the Christendom period and after, we are in a position to see more clearly than any of our pilgrims did how both Christians and Jews lived in mythic (pre-critical, first-naïveté) frameworks of thought and life. It was in such times that the Jewish tradition developed, that Jesus of Nazareth lived, that Jews and Christians in the first century of the common era came apart over the issue of his historical, eschatological and metaphysical identity, and that the conditions arose out of which anti-Judaism and antisemitism have come.

In years to come, then, perhaps even in our own time, I have to wonder whether we shall not see the reformulation by Christians of the classic metaphysical/ontological terms in which doctrines such as those of the divinity of Christ and the Trinity have been formulated and communicated to the Christian faithful—partly out of recognition of the passing of pre-modern times and of modernity, partly in response to the Holocaust, partly in response to secularity. When and if this happens, is it possible that the ongoing journeys of the Christian and Jewish communities will bring us to a time when there will be no insurmountable reasons for Christians and Jews, both inheritors of the biblical tradition, to remain unreconciled on the grounds of theology or metaphysics? Nothing of what I am struggling with here, let it be clearly

understood, is intended to prescind from the historical functioning of the two religious traditions as two distinct and ongoing, meaning-giving systems of faith and life. I am asking, in other words, for a work, a pilgrimage, of imagination rather than assimilation or institutional homogenization.

Here I revisit the intriguing eschatological and mystical intuitions of Lev Gillet and Thomas Merton, like the redactors of *The Pilgrim's Tale*, monastics both: that Christians are called to assist Israel in the fulfillment of its mysterious destiny, a destiny inseparable from their own eschatological destiny; and that there is one wedding feast only, one banquet at which all shall feast together, one mystery in which Israel and Church will be revealed as one.[63] What I take them to be pointing towards is just such a challenge of imagination: that we might situate ourselves in eschatological time at the Messianic wedding feast and look back on our present situation from there, from seats at the same table, in the expectation that this shift of viewpoint might help us see familiar formulations and relationships in a new light. Thus, for example, I am moved to wonder how the doctrines I have mentioned might be restated, looking backwards at them, as it were, *from a time/place when all have sat down together* with Abraham, Sarah and Hagar, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob, Rachel and Leah in the kingdom of heaven.[64] What I am suggesting that Christians need to do in the creation of a post-antisemitic future for all, then, is to take up the task of remythologization of Christian categories in the spirit of a Ricoeurian second-naïveté, and in a spirit of pilgrimage both personal and historical. In the wake of the Holocaust, both Jewish and Christian theologians are already reexamining their respective traditions at this foundational level, one of the most important dimensions of this reexamination on both sides being a very strong interest in Jesus the Jew (Vermes, Crossan, many others), whose fateful journey to Jerusalem stands at the nexus of the division.[65]

For my own part, I want to place a revisiting of the literature of pilgrimage with its implications for spiritual transformation in the context of this fundamental re-envisioning. Of course I am dealing here with hunches, and one of them is that any process by which Jews and Christians might come to a place of full reconciliation (and again, I am not visualizing this as institutional) would take several hundred years, perhaps up to a thousand years. But both Jews and Christians are in their self-understandings pilgrim peoples, and in this I find great hope. Both of our communities see themselves as on the great and ancient journey to Jerusalem—a journey which our Russian pilgrim was unable to complete, but which we may well find ourselves called to continue if not to complete for him, even in this difficult time when the very mention of the name of Jerusalem evokes resonances of conflict, even agony.[66] Meanwhile, we can both hold to the words of Psalm 122 in its celebration of this understanding and this hope:

I rejoiced when they said to me,
"Let us go to the house of the Lord."
Now we stand within your gates,
O Jerusalem:
Jerusalem that is built to be a city
where people come together in unity . . . (1–3, NEB)

Over the last twenty centuries, as we know, the relationship of Jews and Christians as pilgrim peoples, rather than being an experience of coming "together in unity," has been for the most part a fractured one, disfigured almost from the beginning of Christian history by the ugliness of anti-Judaism and antisemitism. But, as in *The Pilgrim's Tale*, this is not the whole story. Other chapters are being written, and there are many hopeful signs. Auschwitz as well as Jerusalem has become a pilgrimage destination for both Jews and Christians. Young Jews go to Auschwitz in great numbers in the "March of the Living." Christians go there mostly as individuals, but there are also opportunities for pilgrimages there of learning and repentance. Study tours to centers of pilgrimage or anti-pilgrimage such as our university offers bring together in creative encounter believers and others; if not "religious," these "pilgrimages" are invariably spiritual. In my own small parish, we have designated pilgrimage (along with spiritual practice, social justice and sexuality) as one of the four most important formational subjects for the 12–16 age group.

As regards prayer, we are also challenged by *The Pilgrim's Tale* to envisage the context of our prayer, and as Golitzin does:

> the insistent, continuous presence of a community, of a tradition, which surely does hold out the possibility of individual experience, but in which the individual is required to act . . . as the pilgrim is shown doing: checking and re-checking himself against the collective witness of the tradition as expressed in Scripture, in the writings of subsequent holy people . . . and in the living voices of those . . . whose lives match up . . . with immemorially accepted criteria of sanctity."[67]

We also follow the admonition of Psalm 122:6 by every Sunday including prayer for those involved in the Israeli-Palestinian situation in the prayers of the people.

Others in other places are making initiatives in the same spirit and with the same hope. These are all small steps; but in the largest sense, the undertaking of this journey, I would affirm, is anything but small. It remains to be seen, of course, how many will take up the pilgrim's staff and set out on the pilgrim path of truth and reconciliation, how soon they will do so, and with what energy and commitment they will do so. In any case, I see commitment to this journey, the journey to which this re-reading of *The Pilgrim's Tale* points us, as, for Christians, nothing less than the major spiritual task of this third millennium of the common era.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
"May those who love you prosper;
peace be within your ramparts
and prosperity in your palaces."
For the sake of these my brothers [and sisters] and my friends,
I will say, "Peace be within you."
For the sake of the house of the Lord our God
I will pray for your good (6–9, NEB).

NOTES

1. Strictly speaking, antisemitism is a hatred of Jews justified on racial or genetic grounds. Coined by the German journalist Wilhelm Marr in the 1870s, in common usage it has come to include not only racially-justified hatred or persecution of Jews but also the earlier religiously-based hatred which is more accurately termed anti-Judaism. However, given that antisemitism is the common term, I will use it to refer to the matters of which I write, even though they predate its coining. For a further clarification of these terms, see Robert Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* (New York: Schocken, 1991), xi–xxvi. For a more recent treatment of antisemitism, see James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001).
2. *The Way of a Pilgrim,* trans. R. M. French, introd. Anthony Bloom (Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh) (London: SPCK, 1972; first edition cop. 1930, introd. W. H. Frere). This was a later edition of the 1930 translation that brought the book to the attention of the English-speaking world. The Russian text had been translated into French in 1928 and in German in 1925; French's version was one of two English translations published in 1930. The other, by Theodore Baily, being a translation not from the Russian, but from the French-language translation of 1928. In 1943 French first published his translation of the second part of the work, *The Pilgrim Continues His Way*; both parts were published together in 1954, and separately again in 1972 (the edition referred to above) and 1973. It is this fuller edition, *The Way of a Pilgrim* and *The Pilgrim Continues His Way* (New York: Seabury Press, 1965), hereinafter referred to as French), that I shall be referring to in the article. Another English translation, by Helen Bacovcin, was published by Doubleday Image Books in 1978. A full bibliographical account up to 1987 is given in Lev Gillet, *The Jesus Prayer*, ed. and introd. Kallistos Ware (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1987), 87. The new translation which moved me to this investigation is Aleksei Pentkovsky, ed. and introd., *The Pilgrim's Tale*, trans. T. Allan Smith, pref. Jaroslav Pelikan (New York: Paulist Press, 1999, hereinafter cited as Smith/Pentkovsky). This edition is the subject of a review essay by Alexander Golitzin, "Pilgrim and Community," *Spiritus* 2:2 (2002): 236–41. It has also been reviewed by Cherry Sonderer, *Anglican Theological Review* 82:4 (Fall 2000): 831–33; and by Andrew Louth, *Irish Theological Quarterly* 66:4 (Winter 2001): 395–97. As I was completing this article, my research assistant passed on to me the published script of a television mini-series treatment of the work, in French, and broadcast by Société Radio-Canada: *Récits d'un pèlerin russe* (Montréal: Fides, 1986), adapted by Roger Leclerc from a translation in *Irénikon*, published by the biritual abbey of Chevetogne in Belgium. Its nine episodes were all based on the first four tales, and no antisemitic reference appears in them. However, the existence of this version of the work in French suggests the need for a survey of other translations of the work, and any secondary literature around it, in other languages.
3. An earlier form of this article, written before I had recognized the fuller implications of the textual differences, was published in Ian Angus, ed., *Anarcho-Modernism: Toward a*

New Critical Theory: [Essays] In Honour of Jerry Zaslove (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2001) 231–42.

4. *The Philokalia: The Complete Text*, 4 v., trans. and ed. G. E. H. Palmer, Philip Sherrard and Kallistos Ware (London: Faber and Faber, 1979–95). A fifth volume is in preparation.
5. Louth's comment on the influence of French's translation is worth noting: "The English version of the tales has remained in print, and must be one of the factors that have [sic] led to the growing popularity of the Jesus prayer, among both Orthodox and non-Orthodox, so that today the Jesus prayer is more widely used than at any other time in history" (*Irish Theological Quarterly*, 396). In this connection, Golitzin mentions J. D. Salinger's reference to it in his novel, *Franny and Zooey;* Golitzin, "Pilgrim and Community," 236.
6. This suggests that the Jesus prayer is a prayer of the mantra type more commonly found in the Hindu tradition. Kallistos Ware discusses this parallel and offers suggestions for further reading in his additions to Gillet's book on the Prayer (Gillet, 116–17). It is also related to the primordial "theology of the name" encountered both in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Exodus 3.14 or Deuteronomy 12.5) and in the New Testament (e.g., Philippians 2.10–11 or John 8.58), as Golitzin points out ("Pilgrim and Community," 240).
7. Not Serbia, as stated in the publisher's blurb on the back cover of the paperback copies of French's edition of 1972.
8. Fedotov comments that "the wandering life" is a more correct description of the protagonist's lifestyle than "pilgrimage" (G. P. Fedotov, ed., *A Treasury of Russian Spirituality* [London: Sheed and Ward, 1952] 282). This way of life, which involved travelling to many different shrines, with no particular endpoint, has more in common with the Celtic pilgrimage of exile than with the mainstream western pattern of pilgrimage involving a journey to a sacred place chosen in the expectation of transformation, followed by a return home. See on this Thomas Merton, "From Pilgrimage to Crusade," in *Mystics and Zen Masters* (New York: Dell, 1967), 94–98.
9. Louth, *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 396.
10. Leo Tolstoy, "Two Old Men," in *Twenty-Three Tales*, trans. Louise and Aylmer Maude (London: Oxford University Press, 1967: *The World's Classics*, v. 72), 102–30.
11. Fedotov, *Treasury of Russian Spirituality,* 282; Golitzin, "Pilgrim and Community," 238.
12. See note 2, above.
13. See Smith/Pentkovsky, 38, note 17, for further details of its publication.
14. French, xiv.
15. Smith/Pentkovsky, 143.
16. Louth, *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 397. In a contrasting view, Golitzin asserts that a result of Pentkovsky's researches "is ultimately to make the pilgrim himself disappear. The earnest persona of the young peasant telling us of his experiences . . . fades away entirely. In his place we discover . . . a bundle of traditions, . . . and thus, behind the charmingly naïve voice of the *Tale's* ostensible narrator, we meet instead a program, a conscious theology of spiritual practice, that is both deliberate and sophisticated" ("Pilgrim and Community," 236–37).
17. In a dissenting view, one which points beyond the monastic provenance of the work as documented by Pentkovsky, Fedotov sees in the book traces of the mysticism of the time of Alexander I: "profound theological and philosophical digressions and comments . . . inconceivable in the mouth of a Russian peasant," and what he regards as undeniable "traces of a romanticism of Western origin" (*Treasury of Russian Spirituality*, 280).
18. Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, *The Tsars and the Jews: Reform, Reaction and Anti-Semitism in Imperial Russia, 1772–1917* (Chur, Switzerland: Harwood, 1993), 55–62.
19. Smith/Pentkovsky, 147–49; French 128–31.
20. Smith/Pentkovsky, 147, 224.

21. Smith/Pentkovsky, 147; French translates it as the study of "Jewish chit-chat," 129.
22. Smith/Pentkovsky, 147.
23. A common motif in the book. For example, the pilgrim's *starets* or spiritual director twice appears to him in dreams, even to the extent on the second occasion of making marks in the margins of the *Philokalia* which are still there in the morning (Smith/Pentkovsky 69, 82).
24. Smith/Pentkovsky, 148.
25. Smith/Pentkovsky, 148.
26. or "mischievous pranks," French, 131.
27. Smith/Pentkovsky, 149.
28. The Old Believers (*raskolniki*) or Old Ritualists (*staroobriadtsi*) were members of a substantial schism that in the 17th century, separated from Russian Orthodoxy rather than accept changes in worship. At the beginning of the 20th century, when they became a legal religious group, only about two per cent of the Russian population, according to French, were Old Ritualists (236–37). Golitzin, however, states that they "accounted for anywhere from a fifth to a third of the peasantry at the turn of the twentieth century" ("Pilgrim and Community," 237)—an enormous difference. David Scheffel's study, *In the Shadow of Antichrist: The Old Believers of Alberta* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1996), asserts that their numerical strength in 1912 was around 20 million (54). Given that the population of the Russian Empire around that time was close to 90 million, 20 million represents around 22 percent (HtmlResAnchor http://www.library.uu.nl/wesp/populstat/populhome.html). Thus Golitzin's figure is to be preferred to French's. As Louth comments, "The Old Ritualist background is significant, as the phenomenon of wanderers or pilgrims . . . was particularly characteristic of the persecuted Old Ritualist sect" (*Irish Theological Quarterly*, 397).
29. Smith/Pentkovsky, 137.
30. Many of which were owned and operated by Jews, something which permitted antisemites to accuse Jews of undertaking pub-ownership deliberately, in order to make the peasants, i.e., the Christian peasants, drunk. See Löwe, *The Tzars and the Jews*, 29.
31. Smith/Pentkovsky, 159–60.
32. Smith/Pentkovsky, 160.
33. Smith/Pentkovsky, 209. French translates as "words of value," 221.
34. Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Prioress's Tale," in *The Riverside Chaucer*, 3rd ed., ed. Larry D. Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), 209–212.
35. Smith/Pentkovsky, 149; French, 131.
36. Smith/Pentkovsky, 159–60.
37. Golitzin notes that the book "is the work of many hands, all of them monastic" (237), and that with one exception (Smith/Pentkovsky, 56–57), "the monks' contributions are unfailingly positive and illuminating"("Pilgrim and Community," 239).
38. The word "pity," if applied only to Jews, can be seen as a demeaning or condescending term. If used with the whole human race or even all believers in mind, it is more inclusive, and evocative of love and sympathy, rather than disdainful. I note that Isaiah 63.9 (both KJV and NRSV) uses the term as an attribute of God.
39. Mark the Monk: perhaps a fifth-century hermit: see Smith/Pentkovsky 225, note 8.
40. Smith/Pentkovsky, 162–63
41. Smith/Pentkovsky, 162.
42. Smith/Pentkovsky, 160, 91.
43. Smith/Pentkovsky, 15–16, 40–41.
44. Smith/Pentkovsky, 9–11.
45. French, Frere, Bloom, Bacovcin, Pentkovsky, Pelikan, Gillet and Fedotov in their works already cited; Louis Bouyer, *Orthodox Spirituality and Protestant and Anglican Spirituality*, trans. Barbara Wall (London: Burns Oates, 1969), 52–53, where he calls the work *Stories of the Pilgrim* (52); Golitzin, Sonderer and Louth in their reviews already cited.

46. Golitzin, "Pilgrim and Community," 237.
47. Golitzin, "Pilgrim and Community," 239.
48. I note here that I am using the term "Israel" here, as Gillet does, in a broadly theological and biblical sense, not in a historical or political sense, e.g., in reference to the State of Israel.
49. Gillet, *The Jesus Prayer*, 9–10.
50. *The Hidden Ground of Love: The Letters of Thomas Merton on Religious Experience and Social Concerns*, ed. William H. Shannon (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1985), 535.
51. For more on this question, see my "Thomas Merton, the Holocaust and the Eclipse of Difference," in Beatrice Bruteau, ed., *Merton and Judaism* (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2003), particularly note 8, and the concluding section, "Kinship and difference."
52. For Chaucer, see note 34, above; John Comenius [Jan Comensky], *The Labyrinth of the World and The Paradise of the Heart*, trans. and introd. Howard Louthan and Andrea Sterk, pref. Jan Milic Lochman (New York: Paulist Press, 1998); John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, 2nd ed., ed and introd. Roger Sharrock (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1987). I hope at a later time to write a sequel to this article which will explore antisemitism as it appears in these other classic works of the literature of Christian pilgrimage.
53. Chaucer, Benson edition, 210, line 502.
54. *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer,* 2nd ed., ed. F. N. Robinson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), 11.
55. Comenius, *Labyrinth of the World*, 63–65.
56. Comenius, *Labyrinth of the World*, 234, note 74.
57. Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, 51.
58. 1 Peter 3.19–22
59. Naomi Burton, Patrick Hart and James Laughlin, eds., Amiya Chakravarty, consulting ed. *The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton* (New York: New Directions, 1973), 235.
60. To contact this group, write to pilgrimage-st@sfu.ca
61. For a discussion of these views, see Clark M. Williamson, *A Guest in the House of Israel: Post-Holocaust Church Theology* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993).
62. *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).
63. Gillet, *The Jesus Prayer*, 9–10; Merton, *Hidden Ground*, 535.
64. Matthew 8.11
65. A recent fine example of the genre is Beatrice Bruteau, ed., *Jesus Through Jewish Eyes* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001).
66. Our parish has taken small steps on this pilgrimage by inviting a Jewish layman, now studying in Jerusalem, to preach one Sunday from the first reading, and, since then, by printing his updates from Jerusalem in our parish newsletter. We have also had as a guest preacher a Roman Catholic laywoman who spent six months with the Sisters of Sion in Jerusalem, working with the Palestinian community; and we have given a small grant to a United Church of Canada laywoman who spent the summer of 2002 teaching English in a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon.
67. Golitzin, "Pilgrim and Community," 241.

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